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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2077  
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING IMMEDIATE 8643  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL IMMEDIATE 4671  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE 2798  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 2414  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE 6498  
RUEATRS/TREASURY DEPT WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 4511  
RHMFISS/USFJ IMMEDIATE  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 000777

SIPDIS

TREASURY FOR A: FOSTER, WINSHIP; TFI: WALLWORK, STACK, HALE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/06/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EFIN](#) [KNNP](#) [PTER](#) [KN](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: DPRK LAUNCH: JAPAN MOVES TO TIGHTEN RESTRICTIONS  
ON DPRK

Classified By: CDA James P. Zumwalt per 1.4 (b/d)

¶1. (C) Summary: In response to the April 5 DPRK missile launch, MOFA recommended to PM Aso on April 6 that the reporting requirement on remittances to the DPRK be lowered from approximately \$300,000 to \$100,000, MOFA told Embassy Tokyo. The Japanese government will not completely ban exports to North Korea or restrict the travel of ethnic Koreans resident in Japan, as called for by some conservative lawmakers and opinion leaders. A final Cabinet decision may come around April 10. End Summary.

¶2. (C) According to a Yomiuri poll published April 6, some 78 percent of respondents called for toughened sanctions against the DPRK in response to its missile launch the previous day. Against this backdrop, MOFA recommended to Prime Minister Aso on April 6 that the reporting requirement on remittances to the DPRK be lowered from 30 million yen (approximately \$300,000) to 10 million yen (\$100,000), MOFA Northeast Asia Director Shigeo Yamada told Embassy Tokyo. This action will be in addition to the government's decision to extend by one year (rather than the normal six months) the existing restrictions on North Korean imports and the ban on DPRK vessels from entering Japan, which are scheduled to expire on April 13.

¶3. (C) The government will not completely ban Japanese exports to North Korea or restrict the travel of ethnic Koreans resident in Japan who remain loyal to the North, Yamada continued. He added that because the new action is a tightening of the remittance reporting requirement rather than an outright ban, it will be responsive to public calls for action while not over-agitating the North. A final Cabinet decision may come around April 10.

¶4. (C) Conservative lawmakers and opinion leaders have urged stronger sanctions on the DPRK in response to the launch. In a conversation with Embassy Tokyo April 3, ruling party lawmaker Ichiro Tsukada said that he and his like-minded colleagues have called on the government to ban all exports to North and strengthen tax and other measures on Chosen Soren-related organizations, in addition to lowering the remittance reporting requirement. (Note: Chosen Soren is the organization representing North Koreans resident in Japan and is the DPRK's de facto embassy here. End note.) Tsukada offered his prediction that MOFA's response to the launch would be "weak," and said that the Diet had the responsibility to represent the will of the people.

15. (C) In a separate conversation with Embassy Tokyo April 3, Shizuoka University DPRK expert Hajime Izumi said that any strengthening of sanctions would only serve a symbolic purpose. With \$8 million in Japanese exports to North Korea in 2008 -- compared to \$2.8 billion in China-DPRK two-way trade and \$1.8 billion in North-South trade -- a ban on Japanese exports to North Korea would have "little to no impact on the North," Izumi said.

16. (C) Ruling coalition partner Komeito's Policy Affairs Chairman Natsuo Yamaguchi echoed this for Embassy Tokyo's acting DCM on April 6, stating that Japan cannot expect an export ban to have that much of an effect. In addition, although Japan does have a number of options before it, it should not use them all up at this time because, if further action becomes necessary at a later date, "the government needs to keep something in reserve," he said.  
ZUMWALT